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THE EASTERN TRAVELLER.

CHAPTER I.

IT was "a morning without clouds." (2 Sam. xxiii. 4.) No object appeared in the distance to wish for, and there fell upon the ear no sound but the soft breathing of our camels, and the gurgling of the water-jars they carried.

The outward eye, half closed against the burning glare of the sun, compelled the mind to turn inwards. We were leaving Egypt and Memphis, the Nile and the Pyramids, "coming up from the wilderness," (Sol. Song viii. 5,) and soon to behold "the promised land."

Cairo, with its busy streets, had been left be-

hind us days ago ; sinking as it were in the distance, until the last of its tall minarets seemed buried in the sand.

We journeyed on that road by which God had led "his ancient people," (Isaiah xliv. 7,) and the very monotony of the dreary waste around proclaimed by its silence, truths never taught with such impressive grandeur by the loudest din of cities, and lessons never read in the other and fairer pages of the book of nature. Many a proud host had crowded this vast plain. Many "a chariot came up and went out of Egypt" (1 Kings x. 29,) to battle, and the warriors of bygone days had been guided over this trackless sand by the very piles of stones we noticed near the road, placed there by the men in olden times, to whom had been addressed the command, "Set thee up way-marks," (Jer. xxxi. 21.)

The earth glittered sometimes with white crystals ; but when tasted, they were bitter, like deceitful pleasures in the wilderness of

this world, for it was "a salt land and not inhabited." (Jer. xvii. 6.)

Then bright water gleamed far off in the horizon, but an hour or two showed us that it was only the *mirage*—vapour raised by the sun.

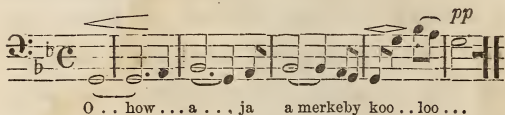
"Where," I asked myself, "are the mighty princes of Babylon, who once led armies over this barrier of sand?" "All the kings of the nations, even all of them lie in glory, every one in his own house," (Isaiah xiv. 18,) in dark and dismal tombs, like those at Thebes, the sepulchres of "the kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves." (Job iii. 14.) Alas, how we care for the life of the body, and seek even to preserve it after death, whilst the soul is deprived of heavenly food, and suffered to perish for ever! Yet the immortal jewel defies destruction, and no means, however costly, can save the casket from decay.

Sometimes we passed over large plains of

pebbles; at others, the soft desert yielded to the camel's feet, or the yellow hills, as billows of smooth sand, were studded with little bunches of the "heath in the desert," (Jer. xvii. 6,) which the camel lowers his long neck to pluck, for "he searcheth after every green thing," (Job xxxix. 8,) like the wild ass, "whose house I have made the wilderness and the barren land his dwellings." (Job xxxix. 6.)

I was aroused by a delightful coolness in the air—a little cloud had passed over the sun, and it brought to my mind the verse, "Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud." (Isa. xxv. 5.)

Then the wild Bedouins encouraged their camels with this song—



At length we came to a green palm-tree, nourished by hidden moisture even in the

desert, and giving evidence of slow but steady growth by a yearly ring of shoots and branches. Thus it is that "the righteous shall flourish as a palm-tree." (Psa. xcii. 12.) And how graceful are its leaves, fit emblems of victory for "the multitude having palms in their hands." (Rev. vii. 9.)

Beneath it was an Arab encampment. "Deborah dwelt under the palm-tree," (Judges iv. 5,) and no place can be found in the wilderness more grateful to the weary than a shady tree. "Saul tarried under a pomegranate-tree;" (1 Sam. xiv. 12,) Abraham also, when he received the three strangers, angels,—"stood by them under the tree." (Gen. xviii. 8.)

The swarthy sons of Ishmael saluted us by a long series of gestures, which were returned by our own Arabs, and these formalities take up so much time, that, when people hastened on important service, they were told to "salute no man by the way." (2 Kings iv. 29; Luke

x. 4.) Some of these Bedouins wear the "abba" cloak of camel's hair, with red leather belts about them. Elijah was thus clad, (2 Kings i. 8,) and "John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins." (Matt. iii. 4.) Their tents were shaped like the roof of a cottage, very low, and made of coarse cloth in black and white stripes. Such were "the tents of Kedar." (Song of Sol. i. 5.) How different from the curtains of Solomon, "white, green, and blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble." (Esth. i. 6.) All around were hundreds of camels, sheep, and goats. "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah. All they from Sheba shall come. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee." (Isa. lx. 6, 7.)

Soon after leaving these "wild men," we crossed the fresh tracks of "a lion, which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away

from any ;" (Prov. xxx. 30,) and then we started a flock of gazelles bounding over the plain, while the fleet ostrich with outstretched pinions skimmed the yellow sand and outstripped them all. "What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider." (Job xxxix. 18.)

The gazelles are easily tamed, as I saw at Damascus, and are almost the only animals domesticated by the Syrians. "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field." (Song of Sol. ii. 7.)

A lonely pelican flew by towards the sea, and it differed in form and plumage from those I had seen on the Nile. David, in affliction said, "I am like a pelican of the wilderness," (Psalm cii. 6.) that is solitary, and cared for by God alone.

And now we came to "the river of Egypt," (Gen. xv. 18,) separating that country from Palestine, and crossing it, dried up by the heat, we trod the soil of Canaan. Large field of lilies lay on

either side. "Consider the lilies how they grow." (Luke xii. 27.) In the distance were green hills, and the darker hue of the "olive trees which thou plantedst not." (Deut. vi. 11.) Camels were ploughing, and oxen, and horses, and everything looked cheerful and happy.

By the road-side was a well, where our Arabs stopped the camels to give them water, reminding us of Abraham's servant, who "made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water, at the time of the evening: even the time that women go out to draw water." (Gen. xxiv. 11.) Here we were close to the city of Gaza, and many women were filling their waterpots. Their faces were veiled, except the eyes, which were painted with *Kohl*, (2 Kings ix. 30,) their ankles ringing with silver anklets, "the tinkling ornaments about the feet," (Isa. iii. 18,) and "the rings and nose-jewels," (Isa. iii. 21,) were worn by some, while others had their hands marked or tatooed with names. "Behold, I

have graven thee on the palms of my hands.”*

At this well, our dragoman Henny recognized a friend, and kissed his hand to him; “my mouth hath kissed my hand;” (Job xxxi. 27,) and then both ran to meet and embraced each other, (Gen. xxxiii. 4,) asking many questions. “Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?” (2 Kings iv. 26.) Jacob found Rachel at a well, (Gen. xxxix. 2,) so also Moses found Zipporah; (Exodus ii. 16, 17,) and “Jesus sat thus on the well.” (John iv. 6.)

During all this time, our Arabs had been praying, and then sang to their camels a plaintive song, while they drew water for them with a wheel, (Eccles. xii. 6,) pouring it into a large cistern hewn out of stone. (Jer. ii. 13.) Near this was the ancient ruin of a tower, and I thought

* Isaiah xlix. 16, and when the prophet says, “another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord,” the literal meaning is, “shall write upon his hand ‘To the Lord.’” Isaiah xliv. 5.

that the whole might have been the work of Uzziah, for "he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells." (2 Chron. xxvi. 10.)

In examining the fragments of pottery and coloured glass sprinkled around, my attention was attracted to an ants' nest, and I traced a long line of these insects, from it to a heap of corn more than a hundred yards distant. "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer." (Prov. xxx. 25.) "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise." (Prov. vi. 6.)

We moved on toward the hill, to which Samson carried the gates of Gaza; but the glory of this town has departed. "The king shall perish from Gaza." (Zech. ix. 5.)

Hearing singing in a house, I looked in and saw "two women grinding at the mill:" (Matt. xxiv. 41,) each holding a handle in the upper millstone. The corn is ground every day, and therefore "no man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge, for he taketh a man's

life to pledge." (Deut. xxiv. 6.) The song ceased at the appearance of a stranger, and when disturbed or in trouble, "the sound of the grinding is low." (Eccles. xii. 4.)

On the other side of the town we passed a dead camel, round which hovered eagles, and vultures, and ravens, for "wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." (Matt. xxiv. 28.)

The bare white mounds around us indicated how far the ancient city had extended : but they also showed that "baldness is come upon Gaza." (Jer. xlvii. 5.) Here I picked up some sculptured marble remains, probably of "the palaces of Gaza : " and a piece of burnt stone reminded me that God had "sent a fire on the wall of Gaza ;" (Amos i. 7,) and had said, "Gaza shall be forsaken." (Zeph. ii. 4.)

"El Bahir, El Bahir, the sea, the sea !" shouted the camel-drivers, and the deep blue waves dashing on the golden shore, refreshed our eyes. Here the shepherds were leading their flocks

homewards; "and the sea-coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks." (Zeph. ii. 6.)

The fishermen chaunted songs as they moved their boats in the shallow water. One who was naked, leaped into the sea, carrying the end of the net; and so the apostles of old fished, when Peter "girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked)." (2 John xxi. 7.)

This sandy beach was to be our home for the night, and the pitching of our tent recalled many a Scripture allusion to our minds.

To give plenty of room, we began to "enlarge the place of the tent by stretching out the curtains." (Isa. liv. 2.) The hammer and tent-pegs were taken from a bag, as "Jael took a nail of the tent and a hammer," (Judges iv. 21,) and fearing a stormy night, we proceeded "to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes," (Isa. liv. 2,) for security.—The upper part of the tent was put up first like an umbrella, then the lower part fastened to



Eastern Tents.

it by loops and wooden buttons; "put the taches into the loops and couple the tent together that it may be one." (Exod. xxvi. 11.) A portion of it was doubled back to form a door; "thou shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle," (Exod. xxvi. 9,) and the men did all this in a very few minutes.

The tent-pins are driven firmly into the ground, and nothing is more unpleasant at

night than the slackening of the ropes; "he hath loosed my cord and afflicted me." (Job xxx. 11.) A violent storm blows the whole tent to the earth, an event which once happened to us, but fortunately at a time when we could retreat to a house not far off; "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved (literally *loosened*), we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. v. 1.) Loosened it must be, even "the nail that is fastened in a sure place shall be removed," (Isa. xxii. 25,) and though our present frail bodies may serve as dwellings for our souls during the night of this life, in the morning of the resurrection "this corruptible must put on incorruption," and happy are those who have believed on that Saviour who said, "I go to prepare a place for you," (John xiv. 2,) "a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall

any of the cords thereof be loosened." (Isa. xxxiii. 20.)

The Arabs unloaded the camels and gave them their evening food, as Laban "ungirded his camels and gave straw and provender for the camels," (Gen. xxiv. 32,) and we observed how careful our servants were that it should be "clean provender." (Isa. xxx. 24.)

The full moon had risen, silvering the sea, and gleaming from the bright spears of our Bedouins, and nothing disturbed the perfect repose of nature but the slight ripple of the waves, or the notes of an owl perched on a lonely rock: "I am like an owl of the desert," (Psa. cii. 6,) "I will make a mourning as the owls." (Micah i. 8.)

One of the camel-drivers gave me a locust bean to eat. It was about five inches long, of a purple colour, and shaped like a locust's wing. These beans are commonly eaten throughout the East by the poor, and some think allusion was made to them, when of John the Baptist

it was said, "his meat was locusts and wild honey." (Mark i. 6, but see Lev. xi. 22.) But it is more probable that the insect locust is meant. The Arabs gathered round their large fire as it burned brightly, and I sat down amongst them to play some airs on the flute, which pleased them very much. In return for this they baked me a large cake by putting it upon the embers, "behold a cake was baken on the coals," (1 Kings xix. 6,) and then they told me some of their strange fairy tales of the desert, and I related one of ours to them. Then taking leave of them for the night "we kneeled down on the shore and prayed," (Acts xxi. 5,) and soon afterwards retired to rest.

For a long time I could not sleep, thinking of home, and gazing through the open door of our tent on the beautiful picture before me. There were our companions of the wilderness, the patient camels, ranged in an outer circle, with their faces turned to the fire and their mild looking dark eyes alternately glancing

with the pale light of the moon, and the red glare of the flickering embers.

The Bedouins formed an inner circle, reposing after a fortnight's journey through their *own* country, the desert. Now and then the scream of the jackal, or the more distant cry of the hyena, broke the stillness of the night, but I said, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." (Psa. iv. 8.)

CHAPTER II.

LONG before grey morn had dawned in the East, our party was in motion. A new country lay before us, new people and new things, new pleasures, and new dangers.

Instead of the boundless wilderness, we were to travel over lofty mountains, by quiet lakes, and rushing rivers. Instead of the hot wind of Egypt, or the simoom of the desert, we felt the fragrant breeze from plains of roses and gardens of olives. Syrians and Turks were to meet us, instead of Bedouins, and the camel was to be exchanged for the fleet horse of Damascus. The tent was soon packed up—the mules loaded, and bidding farewell to the camel-drivers, we mounted our horses, whose tinkling bells made us think of the time,

when "on the bells of the horses shall be Holiness unto the Lord." (Zech. xiv. 20.) Our route was to Mount Tabor, where Christ was transfigured, and from whence a splendid view of Palestine is obtained. First, we rode through a forest of olives, green all the year round. "His beauty shall be as the olive tree:" (Hos. xiv. 6.) and we saw women collecting the fruit, by striking the branches with long poles. "The Lord called thy name a green olive-tree, fair, and of goodly fruit." (Jer. xi. 16, also Psa. lii. 8.) The road here consisted of many paths, often intersecting each other, but often many yards asunder. "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction;" (Matt. vii. 13,) and yet there are many paths in it. May we come to Him, who is "the way, the truth, and the life," praying, "Hold up my goings in thy paths," (Psa. xvii. 5,) and know what David felt when he said, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." (Psa. xxiii. 3.)

Vines clustered round the spreading fig-trees, and under "the shade of their vine and fig-tree," (Micah iv. 4,) shall sit the restored sons of Israel. From these woods, we heard the soft cooing of the turtle-dove; "the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." (Song of Sol. ii. 12.) Crocuses, blue, and pink, and yellow, carpeted the earth; humming-birds fluttered amongst the flowers, and shook the myriads of dew-drops, spangling them like diamonds.

Passing through the plain of Sharon, famed for its roses, (Song of Sol. ii. 1,) we came to Emmaus, and the road from Jerusalem to it, branches into two, near the village. When Christ walked here with the two disciples, "they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further;" (Luke xxiv. 28,) no doubt along the branch-road leading to Joppa. Ramleh, the old Arimathea, is a large town. In the minarets of its mosques, the Muezzim

were calling the Mahometans to prayers, for they never use bells amongst the Turks, though sometimes the congregations are summoned by a man beating two pieces of wood together. But for the Protestant Christian Church at Jerusalem, (See Frontispiece,) a hand-bell is rung before service, by a man on the flat roof of an adjoining house.

The market-place was a busy scene in Ramleh, and in one part of it I noticed a little boy playing on a reed-pipe, while others danced—"children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept;" (Luke vii. 32,) the second part of which verse was explained, when we saw a funeral a little further on; one mourner sings and the others answer. They are generally blind men, "the minstrels and people making a noise." (Matt. ix. 23.) The body was wrapped in a cloth, and carried, not in a coffin, but on a bier—

“and he came and touched the bier ;” (Luke vii. 14,) and the whole scene reminded us of the description in Ecclesiastes, “Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.” (Eccles. xii. 5.)

The burying-place was outside the town, each grave having a tall tombstone, with a turban sculptured and painted upon it. All the tombs were whitewashed—“whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward.” (Matt. xxiii. 27.) Some were cut in the rock, like Joseph’s “own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock.” (Matt. xxvii. 60.) Lilies were growing on others, and several had holes leading into the interior, through which otto of roses is poured.

The road now traversed the valley of Ajalon and crossed over a rocky ridge, where I observed distinctly the marks cut out by the chariot-wheels in ancient times ; but no wheeled vehicle of any kind is found in Palestine now.*

* I remember seeing at Cairo many of the carts without

Some women passed us, carrying their children sitting on their shoulders, and others bearing them on their sides. "Thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." (Isa. xlix. 22.) "Ye shall be borne upon her sides." (Isa. lxvi. 12.) Little boys were playing a curious game with a ball, supported on a pile of stones: others had marked out a sort of draught-board in the sand, using pieces of chalk: and for dice, some slips of palm-branch. In this game, the player is called first "a Nazarene," then "a dog," and when he wins it, is called "a Turk," thus showing their contempt for us Christians.

Nothing strikes one more than the absence of children from the streets of the large towns, like Cairo, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Damascus. They are at school all day, and in dirty, dark, miserable schools. Each boy

linch-pins to keep their rude wheels on the axles, and when I remarked this to a Turk, he said, "If the wheel is to come off it will do so even if a linch-pin is there; and if it is to stay on, the Prophet can keep it on without one!"

leaves his shoes outside the door, and sits cross-legged on the floor, with a board containing his lesson, hanging from his neck. But these are very different from the Mission school at Jerusalem, with its clean comfortable happy faces of all colours, and nations, and religions: Jews, Mahometans, Christians, Copts, Greeks, and every shade between.

Along with some other gentlemen, we paid a visit to the chief Jewish Rabbi. He was seated cross-legged on a sofa, and pressed us to wait for some refreshments. After some time, a servant brought in a saucer full of jelly, and taking a spoon, he put a little of the contents of the saucer into the mouth of each of us. The Rabbi's daughter had just been married, and sat with her golden ornaments, "as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." (Isa. lxi. 10.) Pearls and diamonds hung round her face, and long chains of gold about her neck: "Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy

neck with chains of gold." (Song of Sol. i. 10.) Outside of the city gate we saw three poor lepers, clothed in black, with a box in front of each, for the alms of passing travellers—"And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate." (2 Kings vii. 3.)

At length Mount Tabor was reached, and we ascended to its broad summit, which is covered with rocks, and ruins, and trees. Tired by our journey, we rested here, enjoying "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." (Isa. xxxii. 2.)

The grandeur and the interest of the prospect before us, exceeded all description. Furthest off and above all, rose "that goodly mountain, even Lebanon;" (Deut. iii. 25,) dotted with villages, and sheltering the little group of cedars—"the glory of Lebanon." (Isa. xxxv. 2.) From its sides gushed "the streams from Lebanon;" (Song of Sol. iv. 15,)—clothing its base with green, and refreshing its thousand flocks; and yet "Lebanon is not sufficient to

burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering;" (Isa. xl. 16,) for the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart is what is desired by Him whose "countenance is as Lebanon," "and whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills." In passing afterwards over its lofty peaks, we pitched our tent to defend us from the heat, and lighted a fire of cedar-wood, to melt the snow from the rocks for cooking; the fragrance of the wood, and the pure white snow, reminded us that the word 'Lebanon' means both 'white,' and 'incense;' and so enchanted were we by the scene, that we scarcely could leave it—"will a man leave the snow of Lebanon, which cometh from the rock of the field?" (Jer. xviii. 14.) The grandest ruin in existence moulders at its base, the ancient palace of Solomon, the mighty Baalbec. And near it Damascus, the oldest city in the world; and beyond, that illimitable desert, where clouds of black sand sweep over the

plain—"Elisha came to Damascus,"* and Paul was converted there, (Acts ix. 17,) and "confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus," (Acts ix. 22,) and the place is still shown where he escaped, when "the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket." (Acts ix. 25.)

Nearer was Hermon, beset with clouds; and the day is coming when the mercies of the Lord having fallen on this land, "as the dew of Hermon," (Psa. cxxxiii. 3.) "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in his name." (Psa. lxxxix. 12, and Song of Sol. iv. 8.) The calm blue sea of Galilee lay between, pouring forth, by the heights of Bashan, (Psa. lxviii. 15,) the rapid Jordan, soon lost in the dark waters of the Dead

* One of the two rivers, Abana and Pharpar, has unwholesome water, but the two combined form perhaps the most delicious and healthful drink in the East.—This may be the reason why Naaman the Syrian joined them, when he said, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" (2 Kings v. 12.)

Sea. Far away in the distance was Jerusalem, resting on Moriah and Zion, mourning as it were, and waiting for its people to return, its greatness to revive; for the coming of that day of the Lord, who once wept over the city, when "his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives;" (Zech. xiv. 4,) and those who wait patiently shall not be disappointed, for "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever." (Psa. cxxv. 2.)

Walking over to the other side of Tabor, I continued to survey this noble panorama. There was Samaria, its foundations bare, its columns hurled from the hill to the vale below, and its hewn stones piled in heaps by the husbandman. "I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard, and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." (Micah i. 6.) Mounts Gerizim and Ebal were near it, shadowing Jacob's well, and between them

the city,* from which the woman of Samaria came to hear from Christ of the fountain of living waters. Carmel came next in the pros-



Mounts Gerizim and Ebal.

pect, watered by “that ancient river, the river Kishon.” (Judges v. 21.) Elijah’s cave is there, looking over the sea. But the sea, and the rivers, and mountains are changed, for “He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry,

* The only town in Palestine where Samaritans are now to be found.

and drieth up all the rivers. Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth." (Nahum i. 4.)

Tyre arrested my eye by its prominent position in the midst of the sea, and its walls covered with fishers' nets. The narrow strip of land uniting it to the shore, was formed by Alexander from the ruins of the ancient city. "They shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea." (Ezek. xxvi. 4.) But in vain I looked for the ruins even of the older town—"Though thou be sought for, yet thou shalt never be found again, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xxvi. 21.)

Such were the outskirts of the scene, while at our feet lay the broad plain of Jezreel where Sisera was defeated, (Judges iv. 15,)—and the town of Deborieh, reminding us of the time when "Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in

which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him." (Judges iv. 14.) Many a war-horse and chariot had traversed that level sward. "Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel," (2 Kings ix. 16,) and it is one of the few places in Palestine where the horseman can give free reins to his steed;—"the driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously." (2 Kings ix. 20.) Endor's ruins are scattered there, (1 Sam. xxviii. 7,) where a spirit left the invisible world to visit a king; and near it Nain, where Christ recalled another spirit, saying to the widow's son, "Arise." (Luke vii. 14.) Cana of Galilee too, with its pretty fountain, where the Lord "manifested forth his glory," (John ii. 11,) and the green mound near which the five thousand were fed (John vi. 10,) by Him whose early years were spent amongst those hills, for

there is the peaceful Nazareth clinging to a mountain-side—"They led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built;" (Luke iv. 29,) and beside the road the fields where "his disciples plucked the ears of corn and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." (Luke vi. 1.)

A white city on a lofty mountain shone in the sun. Its name is Saphet—"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." (Matt. v. 14.) But where was Capernaum, in which Jesus lived so long and taught, and "wherein most of his mighty works were done?" (Matt. xi. 23.) Our guide could not tell us. None of the inhabitants of the land could point it out, for no vestige of it, however faint, remains—"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell." (Luke x. 15.)

We had sent on to a village to prepare a house for our reception, because the weather appeared threatening. When Christ thus sent his disciples, "they went and entered into a

village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him, and they did not receive him." (Luke ix. 52, 53.)

An Armenian priest met us, having "a writer's inkhorn by his side," (Ezek. ix. 2,) fixed in his girdle, and he kindly offered me a drink of water. (Gen. xxiv. 18.) He told us that we were on the wrong road, upon which our dragoman got into a violent passion with the muleteer, who had mis-directed us, and said to him in the height of his rage, "Ah Yehoody! Yehoody!" an expression which I had frequently heard used as one of deep reproach, before I knew that it meant "You Jew!" "And they shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach." (Jer. xlv. 12.) When I expostulated with the dragoman he answered, "It's quite right, sir, for the Jews hate Christ,"—"Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord." (Jer. xxix. 19.)

Coming near to the village, we had to dis

mount from our horses, to enable them to get through a narrow gate which had been put up between two walls, to prevent camels from passing that way. Such may have been the gate at Jerusalem called the Needle-door, to which Christ refers. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." (Mark x. 25.) Many of the convents have entrances so small that a foot passenger cannot walk through them without stooping; and this is done for safety to keep out the Arab horsemen. "He that exalteth his gate, seeketh destruction." (Prov. xvii. 19.)

Under the shady arch of the town-gate, sat a number of men, as "Lot sat in the gate of Sodom." (Gen. xix. 1.) Some of them were making bargains, as when "Boaz went up to the gate, and sat him down there." (Ruth iv. 1.) The governor of the village was trying a man for theft, and finding him guilty, sentenced him to be bastinadoed, which was instantly done, by beating the

culprit on the soles of his feet with a stick. When Jeremiah was committed to the dungeon, Ebed-melech went to complain of it to "the king, then sitting in the gate of Benjamin." (Jer. xxxviii. 7.)

On the flat roof of a house, I observed a Mahometan praying with his face turned to Mecca. "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray." (Acts x. 9.) There were stairs leading from the roof to the street, without passing through the house. "Let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take anything out of his house." (Mark xiii. 15.) We soon came to the place which had been prepared for our night's lodging, by the whole family removing from their dwelling. Here the villagers were threshing corn, by driving an ox upon it, harnessed to a rude box on which a man sat, and the animal now and then stopped to rest and eat.—"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." (Deut xxv. 4.)

I found that the box was furnished below with many sharp stones set like teeth in the planks. "I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth." (Isa. xli. 15.) The floor was smooth and hard, and I was told that it was made of the refuse salt; "if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." (Matt. v. 13.) As there were no windows in the house, the flat roof was used for various occupations. Women were spinning there, and knitting. Rahab "brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof." (Josh. ii. 6.)

There were many Jews in the village, and I saw a little boy of twelve years of age, who they said was their Rabbi. "I will give children to be their princes; and babes shall rule over them." (Isa. iii. 4.) But the poor Israelites are cheated,

and deceived, and cruelly treated by their own brethren, as well as by foreigners. "And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour." (Isa. iii. 5.) Over the door of a Jewish house, grew a large bunch of hyssop; "the hyssop that springeth out of the wall:" (1 Kings iv. 33,) and round the roof there was built an open-work parapet, with many round holes in it; "thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof." (Deut. xxii. 8.) On the door-post was a little glazed framework, in which was a piece of paper having some of the law written on it.—"And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates." (Deut. xi. 20.) The Jews kiss this every time they pass over the threshold, but few of them pray earnestly to God that he would fulfil this promise; "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." (Heb. viii. 10.)

Our house was built on the precipitous side of a rock, and I observed that many of the

houses in Siloam at the foot of Mount Olivet, were thus situated, which was probably the cause of the falling of the tower in that place. Dinner being ready we entered the house, and found it to consist of one large room, with a second apartment used as a stable. In such a place at Bethlehem was the Redeemer born. Round this dark room was a raised platform, on which the occupiers of the house slept. "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house nor go up into my bed." (Psa. cxxxii. 3.) The bed consists of nothing but a mattress, which is easily rolled up, and there are no sheets or blankets, for the Easterns do not undress at all at night—"Take up thy bed and walk." (John v. 8.) Several of the villagers came and sat near us during dinner, and it is considered very unpolite not to allow them to do this uninvited. Thus Mary came into Simon's house at Bethany to anoint Christ, (John xii. 1—3,) and the sinner came to Jesus in the Pharisee's house. (Luke vii. 36—38.)

Our servants stood with their shoes off; always done as a mark of respect—"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet." (Exod. iii. 5.) Their eyes were intently fixed on us, watching every motion and anticipating our wants, which were often made known by signs—"Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters." (Psa. cxxiii. 2.) The walls of this house were of mud, as are those of most dwellings in Palestine,—“where thieves break through (literally “dig through”) and steal.” (Matt. vi. 19.) In one corner was a large heap of olives, in another a pile of cotton berries, and the walls were hollowed into numerous shelves. Part of the mud on a projecting stand was formed into a receptacle for oil, and a lighted wick burned in it. The oriental candlestick has always a fixed place, and cannot be removed without putting out the light, “I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” (Rev. ii. 5.) “No man when he hath lighted a candle covereth it with a vessel or putteth it

under a bed, but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light." (Luke viii. 16.) If a Christian is a "light of the world," he should take care that whilst his light is not hid, it shines from the fixed place allotted to him by God, and a candle carried unprotected into the open air is often put out by the wind. Here were some curious water-vessels, shaped and painted like horses and dogs. They are for the use of children, who drink through apertures in the head or leg of the figure, and this was the only instance in which I observed anything shaped by the Turks to represent the form of created things.

A marriage procession passed the house, while we were at tea. A number of young women escorted the bride as they were going "to meet the bridegroom." Each one carried a torch or lamp, formed by pieces of rope dipped in oil, and fastened in wire frames on poles. Every now and then fresh oil was poured on the flame, and the women chaunted a song

which was answered by the men. I noticed that each man and woman had on a wedding garment, (Matt. xxii. 11,) hired for the occasion, and the bride was robed in a rose-coloured veil. It was impossible to look on such a sight without remembering the parable of the ten virgins. (Matt. xxv. 1.)

The cheerful notes of these singers died away in the distance, and was succeeded by the hoarse bark of the countless dogs that infest every Eastern town, "they make a noise like a dog and go round about the city." (Psa. lix. 6.)

The sky was overcast with gloomy clouds, and then bright lightning flashed on every side: "the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven." (Luke xvii. 24.) Rain followed, and poured in torrents driven by the violent wind: "He maketh lightnings for the rain, he bringeth the wind out of his treasures." (Psa. cxxxv. 7.) The whole village was soon aroused by the storm so suddenly bursting upon us. Floods of

water rushed along the narrow streets from the mountains above us, and we heard confused cries of men amid the howling of the storm. The street before us became like a river which undermined the houses and swept many of them away before it; their owners vainly struggling to support the frail mud walls against the deluge of water. But our dwelling was founded upon a rock and stood secure, "and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock." (Luke vi. 48.)

CHAPTER III.

THE sound of the cock-crowing does not warn the Syrian traveller that the dawn is near, for it is heard at all hours of the night, but it told us of that solemn time when Christ said to Peter on Mount Olivet, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." (Matt. xxvi. 34.)

The eyes of all the villagers gazed on our little party wending through their streets. Some peered through the lattice-works of the window: "he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice." (Song of Sol. ii. 9.) Others in their shops below, beckoned with the

hand, and as is their custom, loudly invited us to buy. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. lv. 1.) Each had his pair of rude scales, and the stones used for weights, in a bag. "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small." (Deut. xxv. 13, "a stone and a stone," See margin.) Many persons were returning from the bath, and I noticed in a shop the curious wooden pattens called *cob-cobs*, used by the bathers in walking from one room to another. After an Eastern bath, the feet require to be washed, as they are soiled in returning to the apartment where the bathers' clothes are left: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit;" (John xiii. 10.) So if we be thoroughly cleansed from the guilt of sin, being washed in "the fountain opened for uncleanness," our next duty is to

see to our daily walk and conversation, lest our goings in the path of life be defiled by the pollution of this world.

The pretty village well had a busy crowd about it, and looking down its ancient mouth, I could see the clear water, far, far below, and beyond our reach. However, a woman brought a long rope, and a leathern bucket—"Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." (John iv. 11.) All the mountain side was freshened by the last night's rain, contrasting strongly with the watering in Egypt, where there are no showers from heaven. In that level country, the Nile is pumped up into little canals, and distributed through the fields by innumerable smaller channels, with banks of mud opened and closed by the foot—"For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot: but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys

and drinketh water of the rain of heaven." (Deut. xi. 10, 11.) How beautiful the gardens appeared in the gay morning, watered by the gushing streams from the rocks! For many of the green pastures were refreshed by the same little rill—"a fountain of gardens;" (Song of Sol. iv. 15,) and the solitary watcher in his shady bower was almost concealed by the leaves and the flowers—"The daughter of Zion is left as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." (Isa. i. 8; Job xxvii. 18.) Above the gardens were the vineyards, with their square white towers, and the terrace-walls built of the gathered stones, and the wine-presses—"My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." (Isa. v. 1, 2.) We met two of the

vine-dressers bearing on a pole between them a splendid bunch of purple grapes, as a present to the governor of the village—"And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff." (Numb. xiii. 23.) Such are the hills of Palestine, of which it was said, "the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." (Amos ix. 13.) Then we met another man carrying a large wooden key over his shoulders—"the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder;" (Isa. xxii. 22,) and after him came a crowd of gaily-dressed travellers, the escort of the prince of the Maronites, who himself rode in the centre of them on a white donkey. Once the judges of Israel rode on asses—"Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way," (Judges v. 10,) and Israel saw him who is Judge of all, "meek, and sitting

upon an ass." (Matt. xxi. 5.) It is remarkable, that until very lately, Christians were compelled to use asses, and not horses, whilst travelling among the Mahometans.

Under a shady fig-tree, we found some women resting during the noon-tide heat, and one of them had suspended her baby to a bough of the tree in a large shawl.

There are always figs on the fig-tree, for it produces two crops in the year: and this explains why fruit might be expected upon it, though the season for the fresh figs might not have arrived—"And seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet." (Mark xi. 13.) We now had to cross a little river, running into the Jordan, through a beautiful plain covered with crocuses and wild roses. Tall bulrushes bent over the water, and graceful willows—"they shall spring up as among

the grass, as willows by the water-courses." (Isa. xlv. 4.) Hundreds of tortoises fell splashing into the stream, as we forded it, and then we started at full gallop over the plain, among fields of Indian corn, far higher than our heads.

In the distance we observed an armed Arab riding to meet us. He dashed up at full speed,



Arab Salutation.

couched his long lance, and directing it within a few inches of my face, swept past in a moment. This is their friendly greeting, and they are much amused if a stranger flinches when the weapon grazes his dress. We soon came to the black tents, always the sign of an

Arab encampment; and they are found in all parts of Palestine—"he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." (Gen. xvi. 12.) But this plain is a favourite place for these sons of Ishmael; and about three years ago, when there was a partial famine in Arabia, nearly two millions of Arabs encamped upon it, and forced the neighbouring villages to supply them with food. Reaching again the cultivated land, we observed a sower sowing his seed. This is often done before the soil is ploughed, and the sower casts the grain over all the ground indiscriminately. If stony ground form part of the field, or an old road leads through it, the plough is not worked on such places, and this fact should be borne in mind, when applying the parable of the sower.

We halted under a sycamore tree, and took out our Bibles, which we always carried in our saddle-bags, and remembered what Christ said to Nathanael.—"Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee."

(John i. 48.) Our Mussulman muleteers began their midday prayers; and Christians would do well to learn from Mahometans, that to worship God is a mockery, if we are ashamed to be found doing so.

Here I noticed another mode of threshing. A number of men ranged in a row, and singing in chorus all the time, were beating out beans with long sticks,—“For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument; neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin, but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.” (Isa. xxviii. 27.)

After a long ride, we came to the ancient cave of Adullam, in the wild rocky valley of Rephaim; the only entrance to which was one hundred feet from the ground, high in the cliff. In this curious place, the Psalmist of Israel lived for some years — “David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam; * * * * and there were with him about four hundred men.” (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2.) I had

brought a compass, some candles, and a great quantity of string, to enable me to thread its dark winding passages. The dragoman Henny went in along with me, and we found many large vaulted chambers with shelves and nooks cut in the rock, no doubt for the convenience of David's men. Often we had to crawl through narrow holes, hardly allowing us room to pass, and sometimes to help each other down deep pits. This cavern is said to extend many miles, even to Hebron; and in the furthest point which I reached, I dug up a piece of a water-jar, reminding me that David, when he hid there, and thought of his own city Bethlehem, so near, but yet possessed by the Philistines—"longed and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate." (1 Chron. xi. 17.)

On coming out of this cave, I observed a wolf prowling about, and eagles soared among the crags. There were also wild goats, and

little animals called jerboas, probably conies—
“The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats,
and the rocks for the conies.” (Psa. civ. 18.)
Near this I passed Solomon’s pools, from which
water is still carried by an aqueduct to Jeru-
salem—“I made me pools of water to water
therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.”
(Eccles. ii. 6.)

I dismounted at a pretty village, almost
hidden among the dark olive groves, and walked
into a large public room called a Caravansera.
Each villager contributes to the support of this
room, and in turn furnishes fire and coffee.
There were thirty or forty persons seated on
the floor, every one with his work before him,
and I was soon busily engaged in helping them
to shell cotton seeds.

A brisk breeze had sprung up, and men
winnowed corn on the roofs of the houses.
The grain is cast into the air with a wooden
shovel, and the corn falls down while the chaff
is carried far away—“Whose fan is in his

hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor." (Matt. iii. 12.) The wicked and the righteous may be intermixed, so long as all is quiet in this world, but when the storm comes, it shall be known "whose are His." "The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." (Psa. i. 4.) "The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and as a rolling thing before the whirlwind." (Isa. xvii. 13.) The remainder of my ride to the dreary shores of the Dead Sea, was to be through a bleak country, of mountains as void of culture or green thing, as was the Egyptian desert itself: and the last fields I journeyed through, were those near Bethlehem, once visited by the angels—"and there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." (Luke ii. 8.)

It was with the deepest interest that I watched the sheep feeding on these hills, and the attentive observer fails not to perceive many particulars in such a scene, which give additional force to the numerous similes in the Bible, relating to this subject. I saw the flocks come out of the fold, and the shepherd then took his place in front of them—"When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them." (John x. 4.) No dogs are used, no driving; but the flock recognize in their leader their protector and provider, and "the sheep follow him." (John x. 4.) "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." (John x. 14.) Some of these herdsmen were armed with swords, or guns, or spears, to defend their flocks from harm—"the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (John x. 11.) When any stranger came near, or a dog, or a jackal, the flock instantly closed in towards the shepherd, and he advanced to meet

the danger. These men carried bags or little wallets, containing their day's food, and hung them on a tree—"and he (David) put the stones into a shepherd's bag which he had." (1 Sam. xvii. 40.) Some of them had to lead their flocks for two or three hours, before they came to their pasture—"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters;" (Psa. xxiii. 1, 2,) and here I noticed the difficulty of finding at the same time "green pastures," and "still waters." For the grass is green in that arid country only after rain, and then the waters are generally rushing torrents, swollen by the clouds on the mountains; but "our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep," (Heb. xiii. 20,) can refresh his flock with the tender grass of spring, and enable us to drink of the clear water of life, where it is deep enough to satisfy his people, and where the lambs even may approach without danger.

During the heat of noon, the sheep often collect round some shady tree, and the shepherd sings or plays his reed-pipe to them, gathered round to listen. "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." (Song of Sol. i. 7.)

Then when it is time to return homewards, as the shades of evening fall, the shepherd rises, and all his flock quietly follows. If obstacles occur in the narrow paths, he removes them with his staff. When the young ones of the flock stray, he brings them back with his rod; and even in the dark valleys they walk safely—"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psa. xxiii. 4.) Often I saw the little lambs tired, or in vain struggling to get over some difficult place in the way, and the shepherd took them in his arms, and carried them—"He shall feed his flock like a shep-

herd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." (Isa. xl. 11.) In the evening, hundreds of flocks may be seen slowly wending their way to the village for the night, and they often get mixed together, but the shepherd knows his own sheep well, and finds them out, "as a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered." (Ezek. xxxiv. 12.) Whenever I approached these sheep, they ran from me—for "a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." (John x. 5.) And I observed what I was not aware of before, the very great similarity in the appearance of the goats and the sheep. Indeed I was often puzzled to know them from each other; for the wool of the sheep in Syria is often straight like hair, while the hair of the goat is curled like wool.* But although the

* The tail of the sheep is very large, sometimes three pounds in weight. Lev. iii. 9.

goats and sheep are often alike in appearance, and are mixed in the same flock, when going to their pastures, I noticed a marked difference in their modes of feeding. The goats are continually moving and restlessly wandering among the cliffs: sometimes far from the shepherd, and exposed to wild beasts, while cropping the scanty flowers on the precipices;—but the sheep are more quiet, and keep together, content to feed on the herbage of the lower ground, and looking to their shepherd to supply them with food and comfort.

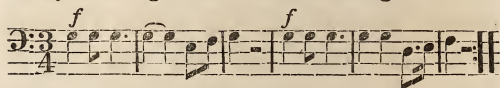
Thus it is that the wicked and the true believers may be often intermingled, nay, appear the same at first sight to an observer who watches them at a distance. But their natures, habits and pleasures are quite distinct. The first have no rest in searching for satisfying pleasures, and pluck fading flowers even on the verge of a precipice. The second look to “the Chief Shepherd” for guidance, support,

and comfort. If they have wandered "as sheep going astray," they "are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls." (1 Pet. ii. 25.) And the difference shall one day be made manifest to the assembled universe. "And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," (Matt. xxv. 32.) "and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." (John x. 16.)

I now came by a mountain-path into the old road to Jericho, and in this journey it is necessary to have Arab guards to protect the traveller from the numerous robbers who infest these hills; "a certain man went down to Jericho and fell among thieves." (Luke x. 30.) In the valleys I saw large quantities of the thornbushes growing, of which little chaplets are made and sold to the pilgrims at Jerusalem; "and when they had platted a crown of thorns they put it upon his head." (Matt. xxvii. 29.) The wild bees

had built nests here, and many a rock shone in the hot sun with honey oozing forth from its crevices; "and he made him to suck honey out of the rock." (Deut. xxiii. 13.) The flocks of sheep I had just passed, and the milk of which I had tasted, together with this honey distilling on the ground, reminded me that this land had once been one "flowing with milk and honey." (Exod. iii. 8.) The Arab chief who escorted me performed at my request some warlike manœuvres with his lance. His horse was the most beautiful animal I have ever seen, and appeared to understand every intention of his master perfectly. The shaft of the spear is made of the bamboo which grows on the banks of the Euphrates, and the Arab told me that a trusty lance when brandished properly should bend nearly double. This Bedouin was well armed, but his accoutrements were roughly made, and over all he wore a sheepskin cloak. However, it was a stirring sight to look upon

him as he galloped by, with upraised spear and loudly shouting this wild war challenge—



Ay a sin o-lo trachin var. Kim a see a-wa kooloo nar.

A mosque appeared over a hill not far off, built on the spot where the Mahomedans say that Moses was buried, although the Bible tells us that the lawgiver of Israel died on the other side of Jordan, and the Moslems make a similar mistake respecting Joshua's grave, which is placed eastward of the river. But now the river itself came in view, the boundary of the land of promise and the emblem of the deep, narrow and hidden separation between this world and heaven.

At first sight you trace its course only by a winding line of deep green, the thick foliage of the trees that grow in Jordan's bed, and which hardly overtop the plain. But soon a silver thread seems to glisten in this dark border, and at length the murmur is heard of its

rapid waters. The banks are too precipitous to allow the traveller to come near to the stream except at one or two places, and we approached it at that spot where John baptized Jesus. The water was of a pale colour but cool and sweet, and whilst a fire was being lighted, I rambled through the tangled thicket on its banks.

A loud noise and shouting brought me back to the place of our bivouac, when I found that the horse of our Bedouin had broken loose and plunged into the river. The dragoon's horse followed and the swift stream soon carried both animals away. The poor Arab, almost frantic with grief, dashed into the water and finally succeeded in bringing both horses to land, but Henny's had lost its saddle, and I perceived that to ford the Jordan was more difficult than I had judged at first. Thence I bent my course to the Dead Sea, and its gloomy shores seemed the more dismal when contrasted with the verdant brink of the river I

had left. No flocks linger there, no bird flutters over its deadly waters, no fish play beneath the surface, even the Arab who brought me there was impatient to depart, for all around is too barren even for the wild Ishmaelite, and the waves that dance in the sun only mock the weary one who lifts the bitter waters to his mouth. A pitchy smell and a vapour of brimstone hung in the air. Black mud thickly crusted with salt stretched for miles round, and torn limbs of trees brought down by Jordan formed a fence about the waters. Such is the grave of Sodom and Gomorrah and the wicked cities of the plain, "which are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 7.)

A large quantity of salt is obtained from these shores, but the best and purest is found in the clefts of the rock. Christians are called "the salt of the earth," (Matt. v. 13,) and they are best protected from pollution, and savour most of that purifying and preserving influence

which is the true spirit of a sanctifying union with Christ, when they are sheltered in the Rock of Ages cleft for them, and when their lives are "hidden with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.)

It was indeed delightful to see the blue tent pitched beside a pretty little rivulet, the brook Cherith. Here the men were unloading my baggage-horses, and like Joseph's brethren "they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack." (Gen. xliv. 11.) Here too a little boy offered to sell me some sparrows. The birds were about the size of the larks of England, and the boy said, "I will give three for half a piastre."* "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing." (Matt. x. 29.) But when I wished to buy more, he said, "I will give you seven for one piastre." "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?" (Luke xii. 6.)

* A piastre is equal to about four cents.

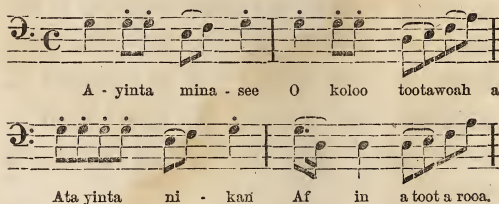
The dragoman went to get the money to pay this boy, and as the Eastern coins are very bulky, Henny generally carried a large number of them tied up in a napkin.—Some of us are endowed by God, with a few great and valuable talents, whilst others possess a large share of lesser gifts. Perhaps such was intended to be shown when in the parable of the ten servants, to one man was given a single pound but in small money, in the condition most useful to enable him to improve it in the world, and yet he came saying, “Lord, behold, here is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin.” (Luke xix. 20.)

Near this place, Elijah had left earth for heaven in a chariot of fire, (2 Kings ii. 11,) and I looked on the clear water of the brook Cherith, as one of the most striking illustrations of prophecy, fulfilled in the land of Palestine. For here Elisha rested, bearing the mantle of his master Elias, who had departed from him, never again to visit earth, until he talked with Jesus trans-

figured on the Mount. Jericho is near, "and the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren." (2 Kings ii. 19.) It is still thus, except in one spot, touched by the finger of God, for the prophet took a cruse of salt, "And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." (2 Kings ii. 21.) So this little gushing fountain, even now, bubbles up, giving moisture and green freshness to the barren soil around. None of the water finds its way to river or sea, it is all consumed in irrigation, and nowhere is there a more fertile garden than that around the brook Cherith.

This stream was but one object in the scene upon which I gazed from my tent door, when night had fallen upon us. Before me was the

Dead Sea, its waves unruffled, and like molten silver in the moonlight; the Jordan flowing into, and never filling it. Mount Quarantaine behind, the scene of Christ's temptation, and the chosen place for a thousand hermits' caves. —The dark foliage around Cherith shadowed the ruins of ancient Jericho, and nearer was the ruddy watch-fire of our Bedouins, and the lights of the village sparkling beyond them. My ear caught the sound of plaintive music from a group of Arab maids, approaching the tent and singing an Arab marriage chaunt, as they clapped their hands in tune—



Their faces were as dark as their untutored hearts, and they knew not of that God whom the Psalmist praised, "O clap your hands, all

ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph." (Psa. xlvii. 1.)

But I said to myself in reverie, "If the words of God, once uttered, all come true, and cities are overthrown, countries laid waste, and nations dispersed by the sovereign will of Him, who said, "Let there be light," and there was light; surely the oft-repeated promises of God shall also be fulfilled, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. xi. 9,) "and all people, nations, and languages shall serve him." (Dan. vii. 14.)

THE END.





